

**STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING SYSTEM
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

IN THE MATTER OF:

██████████
██████████
██████████

Reg. No.: 2014-22617
Issue No(s): 1008; 3007
Case No.: ██████████
Hearing Date: March 13, 2014
County: Wayne (55)

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Susan C. Burke

HEARING DECISION

Following Claimant's request for a hearing, this matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and 400.37; 7 CFR 273.15 to 273.18; 42 CFR 431.200 to 431.250; 45 CFR 99.1 to 99.33; and 45 CFR 205.10. After due notice, a hearing was held on March 13, 2014, from Detroit, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included Claimant. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included ██████████, FIS and ██████████, Hearing Coordinator.

ISSUE

Did the Department properly close Claimant's Family Independence Program (FIP) case and decrease Claimant's Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits due to failure to participate in employment-related activities without good cause?

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Administrative Law Judge, based on the competent, material, and substantial evidence on the whole record, finds as material fact:

1. Claimant was a recipient of FIP and FAP benefits.
2. The Department issued a PATH appointment notice.
3. Claimant could not attend the appointment due to school obligations.
4. The Department issued a Notice of Noncompliance on December 9, 2014, setting a triage date.

5. The Department issued a Notice of Case Action, closing Claimant's case, effective January 1, 2014, on December 9, 2014.
6. Claimant received the Notice of Case Action but not the Notice of Noncompliance.
7. Claimant did not attend the triage scheduled in the Notice of Noncompliance.
8. At the triage, the Department did not find good cause for Claimant not attending the PATH appointment.
9. Claimant requested a hearing, protesting the Department's action on January 9, 2014.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Department policies are contained in the Department of Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), Department of Human Services Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), Department of Human Services Reference Tables Manual (RFT), and Department of Human Services Emergency Relief Manual (ERM).

The Family Independence Program (FIP) was established pursuant to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, PL 104-193, and 42 USC 601 to 679c. The Department (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers FIP pursuant to MCL 400.10 and 400.57a and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3101 to .3131.

The Food Assistance Program (FAP) [formerly known as the Food Stamp (FS) program] is established by the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, and is implemented by the federal regulations contained in Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The Department (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers FAP pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and 1999 AC, Rule 400.3001 through Rule 400.3015.

The Department requires Work Eligible Individuals (WEI) seeking FIP to participate in employment and self-sufficiency-related activities. BEM 233A. Failing, without good cause, to participate in employment or self-sufficiency-related activities results in the WEI being penalized. *Id.* Good cause is a valid reason for noncompliance that is based on factors that are beyond the control of the noncompliant person. *Id.*

PATH participants will not be terminated from a program without the Department first scheduling a triage meeting with the client to jointly discuss noncompliance and good cause. *Id.* Good cause must be based on the best information available at the triage and must be considered even if the client does not attend the triage. *Id.*

In this case, the Department issued a Notice of Noncompliance and a Notice of Case Action to Claimant on December 9, 2014. Claimant testified credibly that she received

the Notice of Case Action, but did not receive the Notice of Noncompliance. The Department representative testified credibly that he did not issue the documents personally, so he could not determine whether the Department properly mailed the Notice of Noncompliance to Claimant. The Department representative further testified that Claimant generally responds to all documentation issued by the Department, so he was surprised that Claimant did not attend the triage. It is concluded that Claimant would have attended the triage had she received the Notice of Noncompliance. In addition, the Department representative testified that had Claimant attended the triage, he would have found good cause for Claimant not attending the PATH appointment due to her having school obligations at the same time as the PATH appointment.

Based on the above discussion, it is concluded that Claimant had good cause to not attend the PATH appointment.

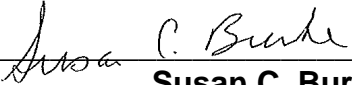
The Administrative Law Judge, based on the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and for the reasons stated on the record, if any, finds that the Department failed to satisfy its burden of showing that it acted in accordance with Department policy when it closed Claimant's FIP case and decreased Claimant's FAP benefits.

DECISION AND ORDER

Accordingly, the Department's decision is REVERSED.

THE DEPARTMENT IS ORDERED TO BEGIN DOING THE FOLLOWING, IN ACCORDANCE WITH DEPARTMENT POLICY AND CONSISTENT WITH THIS HEARING DECISION, WITHIN 10 DAYS OF THE DATE OF MAILING OF THIS DECISION AND ORDER:

1. Remove the sanction from Claimant's case.
2. Reinstate Claimant's FIP case, effective January 1, 2014, and restore any Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits that may have been affected by the FIP closure.
3. Issue FIP and FAP supplements, in accordance with Department policy.



Susan C. Burke
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: March 14, 2014

Date Mailed: March 14, 2014

NOTICE OF APPEAL: The claimant may appeal the Decision and Order to Circuit Court within 30 days of the receipt of the Decision and Order or, if a timely Request for Rehearing or Reconsideration was made, within 30 days of the receipt date of the Decision and Order of Reconsideration or Rehearing Decision.

Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS) may order a rehearing or reconsideration on either its own motion or at the request of a party within 30 days of the mailing date of this Decision and Order. MAHS will not order a rehearing or reconsideration on the Department's motion where the final decision cannot be implemented within 90 days of the filing of the original request (60 days for FAP cases).

A Request for Rehearing or Reconsideration may be granted when one of the following exists:

- Newly discovered evidence that existed at the time of the original hearing that could affect the outcome of the original hearing decision;
- Misapplication of manual policy or law in the hearing decision which led to a wrong conclusion;
- Typographical, mathematical or other obvious error in the hearing decision that affects the rights of the client;
- Failure of the ALJ to address in the hearing decision relevant issues raised in the hearing request.

The Department, AHR or the claimant must specify all reasons for the request. MAHS will not review any response to a request for rehearing/reconsideration. A request must be *received* in MAHS within 30 days of the date the hearing decision is mailed.

The written request must be faxed to (517) 335-6088 and be labeled as follows:

Attention: MAHS Rehearing/Reconsideration Request

If submitted by mail, the written request must be addressed as follows:

Michigan Administrative Hearings
Reconsideration/Rehearing Request
P.O. Box 30639
Lansing, Michigan 48909-07322

SCB/tm

cc: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]